

THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

FIDEL MARS GONZALEZ,

Defendant.

CASE NO. CR21-0164-JCC

ORDER

This matter comes before the Court on Defendant Fidel Mars Gonzalez's unopposed motion for authorization to conduct his plea hearing by videoconference. (Dkt. No. 20.) Having thoroughly considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court hereby GRANTS the motion for the reasons explained below.

Under General Order 04-20, felony pleas and sentencings may proceed by video or telephone conferencing if "the district judge in a particular case finds for specific reasons that the plea or sentencing in that case cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice." *See also* W.D. Wash. General Order 14-21 (Dec. 22, 2021) (extending the duration of General Order 04-20).

Having thoroughly considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court FINDS that further delay in the absence of a video plea hearing would seriously harm the interests of justice. The following specific reasons support this finding: (1) A jury trial is scheduled for March 21,

1 2022, and the pretrial motions deadline has already passed, (*see* Dkt. No. 19); (2) not permitting
2 a video plea hearing could unnecessarily delay Mr. Gonzalez's sentencing (*see* Dkt. No. 20 at 2);
3 and (3) the Government does not oppose the request.

4 It is therefore ORDERED that Mr. Gonzalez's motion (Dkt. No. 20) is GRANTED. The
5 parties will contact the courtroom deputy for the criminal duty Magistrate Judge to schedule the
6 plea hearing. The Magistrate Judge is DIRECTED to make a record of Mr. Gonzalez's consent
7 to a remote proceeding.

8 DATED this 9th day of February 2022.

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12 John C. Coughenour
13 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
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